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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 0685

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA IMMEDIATE 6744

RUCPDO/ALL USDOC DISTDIR COLLECTIVE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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INFO RUEBKC/ATO ASIA IMMEDIATE 1679

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 061918

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - COTE D'IVOIRE

¶1. This Travel Warning updates information on safety and security concerns in Cote d'Ivoire and continues to urge U.S. citizens to exercise extreme caution while traveling in Cote d'Ivoire. This supersedes the Travel Warning issued December 5, 2007.

¶2. Cote d'Ivoire continues to experience periodic episodes of political unrest and violence, sometimes directed against foreigners, since a 2002 failed coup attempt evolved into an armed rebellion that split the country in two. Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo and New Forces leader Guillaume Soro signed the Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) in March 2007 and a new government was formed with Soro as Prime Minister (PM). Although implementation of the accord is ongoing, the political situation has not fully returned to normal. In December 2007, rebel-controlled Bouake, the largest city in northern Cote d'Ivoire, experienced rioting by disaffected rebel soldiers and para-military forces, as well as fighting between opposing factions within the rebel movement amid rumors of a coup attempt. Travel for the local population was severely restricted during these periods, and two employees of the Embassy were evacuated by UN forces to a safe haven. Both UN and French peacekeepers remain in the country.

¶3. Given the sometimes tense and potentially volatile security situation, the Department of State urges American citizens to exercise extreme caution should they travel to Cote d'Ivoire, and to take special care when traveling outside Abidjan. In February 2008, Embassy personnel and other international organizations were prevented from traveling to and from western Cote d'Ivoire due to rioting by government soldiers. Americans planning travel to Cote d'Ivoire despite this travel warning should consult the Embassy and/or their host organizations for the most recent security assessment of the areas to where they plan

to travel. Increases in food and oil prices could provoke impromptu strikes and/or demonstrations. Crime poses the highest risk for foreign visitors in Abidjan, including mugging, robbery, burglary and car jacking. Visitors should be careful when stopped in heavy traffic or at impromptu roadblocks due to the threat of violent robbery. Land routes to neighboring countries are open, although overland travel to Liberia and Guinea is strongly discouraged, and caution is urged when crossing into Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.

¶4. Long-delayed presidential elections have been rescheduled for November 30, 2008. Americans traveling to Cote d'Ivoire should follow political developments carefully, as there is a potential for violence in the run-up to and aftermath of elections.

¶5. The Department of State continues to prohibit minor dependents from accompanying U.S. government employees assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan. Embassy employees are asked to be cautious when traveling within Abidjan and to avoid travel outside of the city at night. Private Americans are urged to follow the same guidelines. U.S. Embassy personnel must obtain prior approval before traveling more than 35 kilometers outside Abidjan. Some of those requests may be denied, or multi-vehicle convoys may be required for security reasons. The Embassy encourages American employees to ensure that they have several days' worth of cooking fuel, food, and water at home, and that their vehicles are fully fueled.

¶6. The U.S. Embassy is located in the Riviera Golf neighborhood of the Cocody section of Abidjan. The Embassy may close to the public temporarily from time to

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time in response to security developments. U.S. citizens who remain in, or travel to, Cote d'Ivoire despite this Travel Warning should consult the Department of State's latest Country Specific Information for Cote d'Ivoire and the Worldwide Caution Travel Alert at <http://travel.state.gov>. Americans should register with the U.S. Embassy by completing a registration form on-line at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/home.asp>, by calling (225) 22-49-40-00, or faxing (225) 22-49-42-02. Americans in Cote d'Ivoire who need assistance should contact the Embassy at (225) 22-49-40-00.

¶7. Current information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States, or for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

¶8. Minimize considered.
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